

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SYDNEY 02259 240208Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01 DRC-01 /120 W

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R 240110Z SEP 73

FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4864

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SYDNEY 2259

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINR, AS

SUBJECT: PARRAMATTA BY-ELECTION

REF: SYDNEY A-113 AND SYDNEY A-127

SUMMARY: UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE VICTORY BY OPPOSITION  
LIBERAL PARTY IN PARRAMATTA BY-ELECTION SUGGESTS A  
COOLING OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR LABOR PARTY GOVERNMENT  
AND IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR LABOR AND COUNTRY PARTIES.  
END SUMMARY

1. LIBERAL PARTY CANDIDATE PHILIP RUDDOCK WON  
PARRAMATTA BY-ELECTION OVER LABOR PARTY CANDIDATE  
M. WHELAN ON SEPTEMBER 22 BY ALSOLUTE MAJORITY.  
LATEST VOTE STATISTICS SHOW RUDDOCK 20,609, WHELAN  
22,841, AND AUSTRALIA PARTY CANDIDATE BUTTERWORTH 3,321,  
WITH ADDITIONAL INSIGNIFICANT NUMBERS DIVIDED AMONG NINE  
OTHER CANDIDATES. WHILE LIBERAL VICTORY HAD BEEN  
EXPECTED ON THE BASIS OF HISTORICAL PATTERN WHICH FAVORS  
OPPOSITION IN BY-ELECTIONS, THE SIZE OF THE VICTORY GIVES  
THIS BY-ELECTION A SPECIAL POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE FULL  
SCOPE OF WHICH IS NOT YET APPARENT. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING  
TO THIS LARGE VICTORY INCLUDE,

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PAGE 02 SYDNEY 02259 240208Z

(A) HEAVY FINANCIAL EFFORT CONTRIBUTED BY LIBERAL PARTY

TO THE CAMPAIGN ESTIMATED TO EXCEED LABOR PARTY  
CAMPAIGN FUNDS BY FIVE TO ONE;

(B) PUBLIC REACTION TO INFLATION WHICH WAS A KEY POINT  
IN LIBERAL PARTY CAMPAIGN;

(C) LAST MINUTE EFFECT OF PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S  
INEPT ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT DECISION TO CONDUCT  
FEASIBILITY SURVEY OFR SYDNEY SECOND AIRPORT AT GALSTON  
WHICH WOULD PUT PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE IN THE FLIGHT  
PATTERN. PRESS TODAY QUOTES ACTU PRESIDENT HAWKE  
AS DESCRIBING TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT AS QTE  
POLITICALLY CRAZY UNQTE.

(D) A COOLING IN ELECTORATE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WHITLAM  
GOVERNMENT. WHILE THE ROLE OF THIS COOLING IN THE  
PARRAMATTA BY-ELECTION IS DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY, ITS  
REALITY IS UNDOUBTED AND COINCIDES WITH NATIONAL  
POLLS WHICH HAVE REFLECTED A SIMILAR DECLINE.

2. THE BY-ELECTION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PRODUCE SOME  
RE-THINKING WITHIN BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION  
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP REGARDING POLITICAL TACTICS. THE BY-  
ELECTION WILL SURELY HAVE SOME EFFECT ON THE PUBLIC  
ATTITUDES ADOPTED BY BOTH PARTIES. THIS MORNINGS'S  
AUSTRALIAN EDITORIALIZES CONTINUING ITS FAVORABLE ATTITUDE  
TOWARD THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT SUBSTANTIVELY, BUT WARNING  
THE GOVERNMENT IT MUST QTE LOOK TO ITS IMAGE UNQTE. SYDNEY  
MORNING HERALD EDITORIAL SERVES NOTICE ON THE LIBERAL AND  
COUNTRY PARTIES THAT THEY MUST GET TOGETHER AND  
ADOPT IMAGINATIVE RESPONSIBLE POLICIES IF THEY ARE TO  
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FAVORABLE SIUTATION WHICH THEY  
ARE NOW IN.

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